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1975/04/03

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AEHR, OGEN VS
SUBJECT: E AND E PLANNING

REF : STATE 073051

1. THE CRUX OF OUR DILEMMA IS THE NECESSITY TO PRESERVE THE KNIFE-EDGE BALANCE BETWEEN NEED TO RECONCILE THE NEED OF MOVING AHEAD TO REDUCE RESIDUAL E&E PROBLEMS TO A MINIMUM WITH THE NECESSITY TO AVOID ANY ACTION WHICH WOULD SET OFF OR SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTE TO A PANIC SITUATION ENDANGERING AMERICAN LIVES WHICH WOULD NOT ONLY COMPLICATE OUR E&E PROBLEM BUT COULD HAVE WIDER REPERCUSSIONS ON THE OVERALL POLITICAL-MILITARY SITUATION. THIS HAVING BEEN SAID, THE COMMENTS BELOW ADDRESS THE QUESTIONS RAISED IN REFTEL:

2. A NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN ALL ELEMENTS OF THE MISSION HAVE ALREADY APPLIED TO HAVE THEIR DEPENDENTS PROCEED TO SAFEHAVEN AND THEIR ORDERS ARE BEING ISSUED AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE. AS THIS PROCESS CONTINUES WE EXPECT THAT OTHERS WILL VOLUNTARILY FOLLOW SUIT IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. IN ADDITION WE WILL BE MOVING AHEAD WITH TRAVEL ORDERS FOR EMPLOYEES FROM CONGENS DANANG AND NHA TRANG WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS OF PEOPLE WHO WILL BE NEEDED HERE. THE LATTER STEP IS ENTIRELY LOGICAL AND CAN BE READILY EXPLAINED. DAO IS CONDUCTING A RIF IN ORDER TO SAVE DAV FUNDS FOR MILITARY SUPPLIES. A NUMBER OF AMERICAN BUSINESS ENTERPRISES IN THE COUNTRY HAVE ALREADY

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DECIDED TO BEGIN DEPARTURE OF DEPENDENTS AND AT LEAST SOME OF THEIR NON-VIETNAMESE STAFF. THE COMBINED EFFECT OF THESE ACTIONS IS EXPECTED TO REDUCE THE US POPULATION IN VIETNAM FROM THE CURRENT TOTAL OF ABOUT 5,800 INCLUDING ALL CATEGORIES-- GOVERNMENTAL, PRIVATE AND DEPENDENTS. WE WILL HAVE TO DETERMINE ON A DAY BY DAY BASIS WHAT ADDITIONAL STEPS TO TAKE. EMBASSY IS IN TOUCH WITH PAA WITH VIEW OF INCREASING SCHEDULED PAA FLIGHTS. (NON-US DIPLOMATIC POPULATION IN SAIGON INCLUDING DEPENDENTS IS LESS THAN 1,000 AND SOME MISSIONS ARE NOW REDUCING THEIR NUMBERS.)

3. WE WILL HAVE NO AMERICANS REMAINING IN MR-2 WITHIN A DAY OR TWO EXCEPT, OF COURSE, THE NINE AMERICANS MISSING IN BAN ME THUOT. WE ARE IN PROCESS OF THINNING OUT IN MR-3 AND MR-4.

4. PARA 1C OF REFTEL RAISES ISSUES OF MONUMENTAL PROPORTIONS, WHICH MUST BE FACED SQUARELY. THERE ARE MORE THAN 17,000 LOCALLY HIRED VIETNAMESE EMPLOYEES IN VARIOUS CATEGORIES (DIRECT HIRE, CONTRACT, ETKOML WITH AN AVERAGE FAMILY SIZE OF 8 PERSONS WE ARE TALKING ABOUT 136,000 PEOPLE IN THISICATERGORY ALONE. (THESE FIGURES INCLUDE LOCAL EMPLOYEES IN MR-1 AND MR-2, SOME OF WHOM REACHED SAIGON.) ASSUMING, CONSERVATIVELY, THAT ABOUT 50 PERCENT WOULD OPT TO LEAVE VIETNAM WE ARE TALKPNG ABOUT 60-70,000 PEOPLE. THERE COULD WELL BE MORE. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE AT LEAST 1,000 VIETNAMESE WHO ARE CLOSE RELATPVES OF
O
US CITIZENS. FINALLY, THERZ ARE AN ESTIMATED 1,500 TCNS
OLE
OLEMPLOYED BY THE US GOVERNME T AND US MEDIA WHICH HAVE TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. A ROUGH ESTIMATE OF THOSE "CLOSE RELATIVES OF US CITIZENS, RANKING GVN OFFICIALS AND THEIR FAMILIES, ETC." WOULD EXCEED TEN THOUSAND. FOR PLANNING PURPOSES, WE SHOULD USE THE FIGURE OF 100,000 FOR WHOSE SAFETY THE USG WILL HAVE A DEFINITIE MUGAL RESPONSIBILITY.

5. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THESE NUMBERS IN THE AGGREGATE POSE MAJOR PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF MOVING SUCH LARGE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE NATIONALS AND THE PROBLEM OF WHERE THESE PEOPLE ARE TO GO. IF WE ARE TO EMERGE WITH THE SLIGHTEST VESTIGE OF HONOR, GIVEN THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM, THE ONLY RIGHT THING



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TO DO MUST BE TO MOVE THESE PEOPLE TO THE US AND RESOLVE ANY LEGAL PROBLEM BY SPECIAL LEGISLATION LATER. THE USG CERTAINLY HAS THE CAPIBILITY TO SOLVE THE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS.

6. AT THIS MOMENT WE HAVE IN THE AREA SUBSTANTIAL SEABORNE TRANSPORTATION ASSETS IN FORM OF THE SHIPS NOW BEING USED IN THE REFUGEE EVACUATION, INCLUDING THE 4 US NAVAL SHIPS NOW AVAILABLE. THE CA
RIER HANCOCK AND ACCOMPANYING SHIPY ARE ON THE
WAY AND WE UNDERSTAND ARE DUE TO ARRIVE ABOUT APRIL 8. IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION UNDER ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES WE MAY, HOWEVER, HAVE CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY GETTING PEOPLE TO THESE SHIPSJM CONSEQUENTLY, OUR EMERGENCY PLANNING CONTINUES TO EMPHASIZE AIR EVACUATION FROM TAN SON NHUT. WE COULD HAVE A SERIOUS PROBLEM, HOWEVER, IN SECURING TAN SAN NHUT AIRFIELD AND ACCESS TO IT. WE ARE IN URGENT COMMUNICATIONS WITH CINCPAC NOW TO DEVELOP PLANS TO INSERT ON SHORT NOTICE A FORCE TO SECURE THE AIR-FIELD. WE NEED TO DEVELOP ALL PLANS ON AN URGENT BASIS AND WHILE DOING SO SHOULD HAVE AVAILABLE CLOSE BY ALL POSSIBLE MILITARY ASSETS TO PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY WHICH IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL IN A POSSIBLE SITUATION THE SPECIFIC FEATURES OF WHICH ARE VERY DIFFICULT TO DEFINE WITH ANY PRECISION IN ADVANCE.
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